



Premier League Reading Stars

Evaluation report 2014-15

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National Literacy Trust

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Words for life

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Executive summary

The National Literacy Trust's Premier League Reading Stars programme (PLRS) is a literacy intervention for children aged 9-13 that uses the motivational power of Premier League football to inspire children and young people to read more and to improve their literacy skills. The 2014-15 evaluation, which ran from September 2014 to July 2015, used a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach to capture the outcome of the programme on participating children. This included a pre and post quantitative online survey for participating children and for a control group of non-participating children, interviews with practitioners, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with pupils.

The surveyed and interviewed children were primarily boys and football fans, and 30% of them were on free school meals (FSM). Slightly more primary school children were surveyed than pupils in secondary schools. This is representative of the wider pool of pupils who take part in the programme.

The outcomes of the programme are very positive according to this year's quantitative and qualitative findings. Compared with a group of children who didn't participate in PLRS (N = 64), children who took part in PLRS activities (N = 189):

- **Are significantly more likely to enjoy reading:** Reading enjoyment increased from 44% in the pre-survey to 59% in the post-survey, while reading enjoyment levels in the control group only increased from 59% to 64% over the same time period.
- **Feel significantly more confident as readers:** Reading confidence increased from 63% in the pre-survey to 80% in the post-survey, while the percentage of pupils who feel confident about their reading in the control group remained stable at around 80%, allowing the PLRS group to catch up.
- **Have significantly more positive attitudes towards reading:** 77% of PLRS pupils agreed with the statement "I'm proud that I'm a reader" in the post survey, as opposed to 71% in the pre-survey, while the percentage of children in the control group who say that they are proud to be a reader decreased from 79% to 73% over the same period of time.
- **Are significantly more positive about footballers as readers:** 62% of PLRS children are convinced that footballers read in the post-survey, as opposed to 34% in the pre-survey, while the increase in control group children was more muted (from 20% to 27%).

Through the programme, children become more enthusiastic about reading, they discover new reading materials and new genres that they enjoy, and they start to associate literacy with entertaining activities around football, which they enjoyed in their small elite group of "reading stars". They become interested in reading and have discussions about what they read with each other and with their teachers. Furthermore, practitioners see a noticeable improvement in their pupils' literacy skills.

They often report an improvement in children's behaviour as their literacy skills develop during the programme. It seems that children who are struggling with literacy or reading enjoyment are first and foremost children who are disengaged with school in general, and who may also adopt disruptive behaviours in class. According to practitioners, PLRS is an effective intervention for these children as it provides them with a unique chance to associate one of their favourite activities (football) with progress in literacy and to mix fun with learning. Overall, teachers make a very clear link between improved attitudes and improved attainment, with no doubt that the former leads to the latter.

Finally, the evaluation was not only seeking to establish whether or not PLRS is a successful intervention but we also investigated why it does or does not work through the qualitative strand of the methodology. We do know that there may be many delivery methods as the programme is adaptable to various settings, and we need to assess PLRS as it is provided by the National Literacy Trust (with teacher training, school pack and digital offer), taking into account that we do not have control over delivery. As expected, since PLRS achieves positive outcomes for pupils, most aspects of the programme come up in the list of what makes it successful. Adults who delivered PLRS with young people commend the general approach of the programme, its practical applications, and the important buy-in and support from the Premier League.

1. Introduction

Description of the programme

The National Literacy Trust's Premier League Reading Stars programme (PLRS) is a literacy intervention for children aged 9-13 that uses the motivational power of Premier League (PL) football to inspire children and young people to read more and to improve their literacy skills. PLRS closes the gap in reading ability between those who are under-achieving and those who are reading at the expected level. It works by improving students' attitudes to literacy, as well as their motivation and behaviours towards, and enjoyment of, this core subject. The programme uses footballers as reading role models to switch mentalities on reading. It introduces new types of text and validates existing practice where it is in place, inspiring young people to read more and improve their literacy skills.

The resource pack, which is purchased by the schools, enables teachers, librarians and staff from PL football clubs to deliver the programme with a targeted group of children. It contains PL branded incentives for pupils, including colourful reading journals, badges and certificates. A toolkit, known as The Tactics Book, provides 10 curriculum-supporting sessions. Each pack provides enough resources for 32 pupils and content for 10 sessions.

In addition, via the PLRS online challenges, any child with internet access can watch exclusive films of 20 high-profile PL players talking about what, when and why they like reading. They can also unlock rewards for completing comprehension challenges, and schools that buy a resource pack can give pupils the chance to win signed PL memorabilia in a prize draw. In 2014, this included shirts and pennants signed by whole teams, as well as signed football boots.

The online challenges introduce young people to new types of reading material. The PLRS book list, chosen by experts and promoted by the programme, is designed to fit young people's interests.

In 2014-15, 479 packs were distributed to schools and other settings (of which 428 were sold), while 293 teachers and other practitioners attended the training sessions.

Evaluation methodology

This evaluation used a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach to capture the outcomes of the programme on participating children.

A subset of 30 schools was selected for an in-depth quantitative evaluation. Several dropped out but 23 (with a total of 189 pupils) still participated in the evaluation. The total evaluation period ran from September 2014 to July 2015. The children completed:

- A pre-survey that scoped out children's attitudes to reading, their literacy behaviours, and the role of football in their lives
- A post-survey immediately after the programme assessing any changes in attitudes and behaviours

Responses were matched for each child from one survey to the next to track progress over time. Children who did not participate in PLRS activities but who had similar profiles were also surveyed in each school at the same time as the PLRS pupils to provide a comparison group (N = 64). Repeated measure ANOVAs were used to assess whether there were significant differences over time between children who took part in PLRS activities and those who did not. The report mainly focuses on findings that are statistically significant¹, but some non-significant findings are outlined at times because they revealed an interesting trend.

In addition, we also explored findings by FSM uptake and gender. Overall, there were no significant differences within subgroups. This suggests that generally boys do not progress more or less than girls, and children who receive FSM do not progress more or less than children who do not receive FSM.

¹ If a difference or relationship is statistically significant then the likelihood is not more than 1 in 20 (5% using the 0.05 p-value) that it would happen by chance. We can therefore be relatively confident that it is meaningful.

As the comparison group is fairly small (64 respondents), it is impossible to compare subgroup data with the control group: there are only 13 children who receive FSM in the control group, and only 24 girls, as can be seen below in tables 1, 2 and 3. As a result, we only highlight sub-group data for children who took part in PLRS.

A possible reason why the comparison group is small, and why even the intervention group was smaller than expected, relates to difficulties with data collection. Despite our best efforts, attrition between pre and post surveys was problematic: many teachers failed to collect the right data or any data at all. In particular, teachers struggled to survey the same pupils twice, and only 189 completed both the pre and post surveys to provide us with matched data. Similar problems occurred with attainment data.

The sample sizes in this year's evaluation are large enough to allow us to explore the data using certain statistical analyses. However, the difficulties in obtaining data and the limitations on the control group do show that solutions have to be found for upcoming evaluations to simplify data collection and make it more effective.

In addition to the quantitative evaluation via the surveys, qualitative data were also collected and analysed. Methods used were:

- Focus groups discussions were conducted with pupils measuring notably the role of football, footballers, other mentors, and the PL badge in initiating attitudinal change, the relationship between attitudes and behaviours, and the relationship between attitudes and academic skills
- Interviews with teachers and other practitioners who delivered PLRS gathered their professional point of view on the children's progress, as well as their experience of the programme as practitioners. We sought to measure changes in their practice, and in their attitudes to football and the use of non-traditional techniques in teaching literacy

In this report, we present both qualitative and quantitative findings. We chose to organise them by themes, rather than by data collection methods.

2. Profile of PLRS participants

Via interviews, group discussions and the online survey, we were able to create a generic profile of the children and young people who take part in PLRS. This is to ensure first of all that PLRS is targeted at the pupils who need it most, and that it should help refining the fixtures of the programme so that they meet the needs and expectations of participants.

The data reveal that PLRS participants are primarily boys (67%), in primary school (55%), with about 30% of them on free school meals (FSM). They may be struggling readers with poor literacy skills but, above all, they are reluctant readers who do not enjoy reading even if they can read at expected levels for their age. As expected, they tend to be football fans who are interested in the intervention because of the football angle. Teachers insist that many PLRS participants are children with behavioural issues, especially in secondary school, whose negative attitudes to reading directly relate to their negative attitudes to school and learning in general, and might be linked with a poor home learning environment, as experienced by practitioners who struggle to get parents involved in their children's education.

This section describes in detail the profile of PLRS participants for the academic year 2014-15 based on both quantitative and qualitative data.

2.1 Demographics

Statistics are not directly available from schools about PLRS participants, but we do have background information about survey respondents. Boys make up over two thirds of the PLRS sample (see Table 1), most participants are in primary school (especially Year 5 – see Table 2), and over a quarter of children in the sample are on FSM (see Table 3). A clear majority of pupils are White, and less than a quarter are Asian or Asian British (see Table 4). PLRS is delivered in schools but also in football clubs, public libraries and other settings. Only children who are taking part in PLRS in primary or secondary schools were represented in the sample.

Intervention and control group children were well matched in terms of their demographic background and, with the exception of year group, any differences between the samples were not statistically significant².

Table 1: Gender

	Boy	Girl	Total
INTERVENTION	126	63	189
	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
CONTROL	38	24	62
	61.3%	38.7%	100.0%

Table 2: Year Groups

	Primary			Secondary			Total
	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	
INTERVENTION	5	79	16	27	33	21	181
	2.8%	43.6%	8.8%	14.9%	18.2%	11.6%	100.0%
	100 (55.2%)			81 (44.8%)			
CONTROL	0	38	3	10	2	11	64
	0.0%	59.4%	4.7%	15.6%	3.1%	17.2%	100.0%
	41 (64.1%)			23 (35.9%)			

Table 3: Free School Meals

	Yes	No	Total
INTERVENTION	50	132	182
	27.5%	72.5%	100.0%

² Gender: $\chi^2(1, N = 251) = 0.440, p = .446$; ethnicity: $\chi^2(4, N = 254) = 8.632, p = .071$; FSM uptake: $\chi^2(1, N = 243) = 0.342, p = .461$. Year group: $\chi^2(5, N = 245) = 13.967, p = .016$

CONTROL	13	48	61
	21.3%	78.7%	100.0%

Table 4: Ethnicity

	White or White British	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Any other ethnic group	Total
INTERVENTION	135	6	45	2	2	190
	71.1%	3.2%	23.7%	1.1%	1.1%	100.0%
CONTROL	34	3	23	1	3	64
	53.1%	4.7%	35.9%	1.6%	4.7%	100.0%

It may not be a traditional background question but this is highly relevant to PLRS: two thirds of survey participants watch football (66%), of whom 60% watch Premier League football. Eighty percent of the children also support a Premier League club. There is no difference on this question between the intervention and control groups (61% of pupils in the control group watch football and the difference is not statistically significant). However, boys and girls differ significantly³ on the matter, with 82.5% of boys in the PLRS group watching football regularly compared with only 31.7% of girls.

2.2 Reluctant readers: more about attitudes than abilities

The PLRS programme is intended to help children with their reading, and indeed it achieves a high level of success. But, according to interviews with practitioners, the programme primarily reaches its goal by targeting negative attitudes rather than focusing on skills. As a result, practitioners tend to select children based on their enjoyment of reading rather than their literacy skills only, although both go hand in hand: struggling readers do not enjoy reading and those who do not enjoy reading tend to read less well. So, the PLRS participants are mainly described by practitioners as reluctant readers, pupils who tend not to enjoy reading and have negative attitudes to reading across the board rather than a particular dislike for certain genres or reading materials.

"I think sometimes you need to pick kids who are better able to read, but who are turned off reading. Trying to find these pupils who are able to read but have been turned off for whatever reason, those reluctant readers. They would work better because the programme is most effective at switching things on for reading, for the kids. It's okay to have lower ability readers, but you also need to look further up the reading range and try to get those involved because that can change the dynamic in the group."

(School librarian, secondary school)

"Based on reading skills, and for a few, it's just that encouragement and push to choose more books to take home. It's not just skills, it's also interest and confidence. In the first group, there were a lot of not keen readers."

(School librarian, primary school)

"A lot of them had decent skills to start with anyway; they can read. But it's just the comprehension. I think they need that extra push. Those gaps that they have, I think that's more where they needed help, so I think it was more about their attitudes."

(School librarian, primary school)

And indeed, group discussions with children and young people show that, consistent with the description of participants from practitioners, many PLRS students have negative attitudes about reading, especially in secondary schools.

"I don't like reading at ALL! I only like reading text messages."

(Girl, secondary school)

"I don't know. I just pretend to read. Because we have to read for form, but I just pretend to read."

(Boy, secondary school)

³ Chi² (1, N = 189) = 48.024, p = .000, Phi = -.504

"Yeah, because they just put in too many words. There's about 10 pages of the introduction and I don't really care about that. I care about the action. They just put in way too many words."

(Boy, secondary school)

"Miss, books are so boring. All the books are boring. Cooking books miss, they're so boring. I only like books with pictures."

(Boy, secondary school)

"Well, I like watching football. But reading is boring. You're better off watching it on TV. Even the Witch and the Wardrobe..."

(Boy, secondary school)

Based on these discussions, it seems that this dislike of reading is not very specific: other than cookbooks and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the group participants do not give examples of books that they have read and did not enjoy, and they tend to make sweeping statements about all books. Also noteworthy is the fact that reading is associated with books rather than any other materials (magazines, comic books, websites etc). It might be that these negative attitudes to books are somewhat inherited rather than stemming from actual experiences, as if these children were already convinced that they would hate books before they read any, and their subsequent experiences with reading only confirmed their bias.

This was balanced out by a few children who claimed to love reading, although it was fairly apparent that positive attitudes to reading were more prevalent in primary schools than in secondary. Likewise, these children tended to be overwhelmingly positive with very broad statements as if, once again, their opinions on books and reading predated their actual experiences.

"I really love reading, I reaaally love it. I could just pick up a book and I could read it for ages."

(Boy, secondary school)

"I read every day!"

(Girl, primary school)

"I want to read and I like reading because you know when you read a book to give you ideas, then the ideas will be good and it's going to make your writing a bit better."

(Girl, primary school)

2.3 Children and young people with behavioural issues

In addition to an interest in football and negative attitudes to reading, a lot of participating children, particularly in secondary schools, displayed fairly severe behavioural issues according to teachers and other practitioners who delivered the programme. It was so apparent that it can be made an expected feature of the PLRS participant typology, particularly in secondary schools. Even though it is not a criteria of selection to be in the programme, disruptive behaviours tend to be associated with negative attitudes to reading and lower literacy skills. Practitioners describe how they struggled with keeping discipline and how it interfered with the delivery of the activities at times.

"Invariably, because of the kids we did it with, there was an element of... of chaos."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"The difficulty this year was in the group that we chose. We ended up with 16 pupils starting the programme, and they were all at the lower end of the reading ability range in this school. At least 5-6 had behavioural difficulties. We found we were dealing with difficult behaviour rather than getting into the programme. That became quite frustrating for me and my colleagues."

(School librarian, secondary school)

"What we've had this year is a number of kids who misbehave just because they do. It's part of their make up, and it made the sessions far less positive than they could have been."

(School librarian, secondary school)

"By 'hard to reach', teachers are describing him as, quote, 'un-teachable'. That type of thing. At risk of permanent exclusion. So, no, we didn't choose the nice option of a nice bunch of little lads who love their football. We deliberately went for students who have significant social and/or emotional and behavioural issues. Because they're the ones who are most important to us."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"It started with reading issues, but the two often go hand in hand. So they're disaffected because their low levels of ability mean they find it very difficult to access the curriculum. Then their behaviour's bloody awful."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"For some of them, it's behaviour and learning. It's general. PLRS gives them a little push. We had one in the first year whose behaviour was ridiculous. But this helped so much! It's helped him find his confidence and then he started getting better."

(PE teacher, primary school)

This was perceptible in the group discussions that were conducted with secondary school children as part of the evaluation: the young people were very easily distracted, moved about a lot, and had a short attention span.

Further than just describing some disruptive behaviours, teachers shared more background information about PLRS participants in their interviews, notably a lack of support towards reading and literacy at home, and some previous reading interventions, which may have left unpleasant memories, reinforcing negative attitudes and behaviours.

"He's used to being dragged into special groups because his skills are so poor."

(English teacher, PRU)

"Especially when they get to us [PRU], they've had every intervention going. And they hate being treated like little kids."

(English teacher, PRU)

"At the beginning they're a bit... they're proper disengaged, they don't like reading. I mean, you tell them to come for an hour and we're going to do reading stuff, they'll be like 'no chance'. They come down because it's with me and I do PE, so they think they're going to do PE."

(PE teacher, primary school)

"We were able to tap into a lot of kids who have fallen foul of the discipline system, who have had very negative experiences of their first year in secondary school, but who can really benefit from seeing their peers succeed, from seeing that you can be successful. That was quite a powerful message."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"A lot of these children come from very troubled backgrounds, and a lot of the trouble they have at school comes from lack of support at home. It's very difficult to get parents involved in anything we do here. Y, for example, got quite excited about reading, he got some books to take home, some Roald Dahl books, and he brought them back. He was very honest when he said 'I've got nowhere to read this book. I can't read it at home. I just can't read it at home! I don't have the space, my brother takes the mickey out of me, it's too noisy.' So, you know, they don't read a lot at home."

(English teacher, PRU)

"Yeah, it was really quite moving to see. And quite shocking in some ways. For example, we had a child who's EAL, his older brothers have been excluded from schools, there's a pattern. He was allowed to come on Saturday because it was his birthday. That was his treat for his birthday. No parents came. So he was left on his own, reading on his own, while all the others were reading to their parents. So you had things like that."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"But I don't know how much our parents value... they do value education. But they don't see their part in it. It's the school's job, the school will teach them how to read, the school will take care of that. And we've accepted that. We work around that."
(School librarian, primary school)

This presents a dilemma for practitioners since they want to use PLRS for the students who need the intervention the most and will respond well to it, that is to say students who are disengaged with school and struggle with more traditional skill-based classroom-type interventions. Yet, on the other hand, because these children tend to display disruptive behaviours, practitioners find it hard to manage them in a group, especially with practical activities that balance discipline with fun.

"I think there was an issue for us for the type of pupil that this programme is best for. Clearly, reading age is one of the factors, but there also has to be the issue of interest in football. That was fine but then if the kids involved have difficulties in the classroom, these kids have difficulties in the programme."
(School librarian, secondary school)

2.4 Age, gender and pupil premium

To most practitioners, it seems that attitudes to reading and behavioural issues in school are more important in determining who should participate in PLRS than background demographics such as gender or parental income.

"Pupil premium, that kind of thing, I don't think it makes a difference."
(PE teacher, primary school)

"It's down to getting to know kids and promoting what they want and what they need."
(School librarian, secondary school)

"I thought it would be more for boys, because girls don't really like football. But then we had some girls who were very keen!"
(Learning assistant, primary school)

Nonetheless, many teachers are aware of the links that exist between deprivation, gender and lower literacy skills, so they primarily try to recruit boys and children eligible for the pupil premium allocation.

"It was a mixture of pupil premium kids, girls and boys, a few Pakistani children. Boys with behaviour... not poor, but just silly, immature boys. Not keen on reading, but they loved football. That was the hook."
(School librarian, primary school)

"First pre-condition was pupil premium. Then, that they were flagging in English."
(Head teacher, secondary school)

Many practitioners in interviews come to the conclusion that what seems to work best for the dynamic of the PLRS group is to have a mixture of children, both boys and girls, and more or less able readers. And it appears quite clearly that secondary school children who struggle with discipline, although they can benefit from the programme, do not make the most of it since reading is not their biggest problem.

3. Positive impact of PLRS

The positive outcomes of the programme are clear from both the quantitative and qualitative data, and are confirmed by testimonies from teachers and other practitioners.

First and foremost, throughout their participation in PLRS, the students develop more positive attitudes to reading: they become more able to express their preferences, and more discriminating about what they like and dislike. They discover new types of reading materials, new genres, new authors, and become more motivated to read, more enthusiastic, and they enjoy reading more.

Further, children become more confident in their own reading skills, and practitioners see a noticeable improvement in their literacy. Additionally, teachers make a clear link between improved attitudes and improved attainment, with no doubt that the former leads to the latter.

A control group enabled us to establish that any changes that take place among PLRS children are likely to be due to the programme, and not only to maturation and other educational activities. It is also interesting that there are no significant differences between sub-groups in their progression over time. This suggests that no type of children benefitted from the programme more than other groups. This might be surprising as PLRS is often construed as an intervention for boys, because it uses football to catch their attention. But this evaluation suggests that girls benefit from the programme just as much as boys.

3.1 More enjoyment of reading and positive attitudes to reading

When asked about the impact of PLRS, teachers primarily speak of changes in attitudes to reading, namely enjoyment, confidence, motivation and enthusiasm.

"I think it's a good tool to change their attitudes and make them feel valued as readers."
(English teacher, PRU)

"It's about the fact that they've engaged with an after-school activity, which is around reading, and they have done a significant amount of reading which they wouldn't have done. And for a large percentage of the boys, it's their first positive academic experience of Y7."
(Head teacher, secondary school)

"It's about viewing reading. I think sometimes it feels dull and dismal, and boring for young kids. And the great thing about the programme is that it makes you realise that you're reading when you do things that you enjoy."
(Head of school library, secondary school)

"They're really disengaged, and then after a couple of weeks they get right into it. They come to me saying 'Do we have reading stars on Friday? Are we definitely doing reading stars?' So it works."
(PE teacher, primary school)

"A lot of them had decent skills to start with anyway; they can read. But it's the comprehension. I think they just need that extra push. Those gaps that they have, I think that's more where they needed help, so I think it was more about their attitudes. They were more and more keen at every session as they were coming."
(School librarian, primary school)

"Some aspects of the programme we managed to make really fun. And that's a success in itself. Some of these kids, if you were to tell them we're going to do a session on poetry, they would have groaned. However, we did have a session on poetry, and it was a cool match-scoring poem and we turned it into a drama activity. They acted it out and we recorded it. They really enjoyed it and it was really successful. At the end we said 'Hey, you've just acted out a piece of poetry!' and they were shocked: 'No we didn't!'"
(English teacher, secondary school)

"The first group, there were a lot of not keen readers. After a few sessions, they were just reading non-stop! We couldn't stop them!" (Learning assistant, primary school)

"In terms of PLRS, we recognised it quite quickly when it came out for what it could do for our children. Because we never had a problem creating children who could read, but we did have a problem creating readers."

(Head of school, primary school)

"They're just more keen! A lot more keen. It's so hard to stop them now! They don't want to leave at the end of the sessions: 'Can we do the next bit now?' Several times, I've offered 'Should we play football now?' and they say 'Yes, yes, in a minute!' They just want to finish reading! They still come up to me now, after they've finished, and they talk to me about the books they've read, or what they remember from PLRS, or what books they want to read next. So yeah, it's lovely, it's really changed them completely."

(Learning assistant, primary school)

"To watch them sit down and pick up a book and read without interruption – and there was not one element of interruption for half an hour! – with their families, that was a really powerful message. For them to have such a positive experience, to feel valued, to be able to lead a reading session, that's really important to us."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"It's the soft data actually that's really impressive. It's the attitudes to reading. The children choose to read and we see a cultural shift. The choices they make. We can see clearly that these children have just switched on. You can measure attainment in levels or reading age, but the big change, which is just as or even more significant, is the change in behaviour and attitudes. It's a shift in mentalities."

(Head of school, primary school)

Testimonies from teachers are corroborated by results from the online survey completed independently by children. The analyses show that there was a significant⁴ difference in the degree to which children enjoy reading over time depending on whether or not they take part in PLRS, with children who took part in PLRS activities being more likely to enjoy reading at the end of the project than children in the control group.

Exploring this difference in terms of percentages, Table 5 shows that the percentage of PLRS children who enjoy reading increased from 44% at pre-survey to 66% at post-survey. In particular, the number of children who enjoy reading "very much" increased by 75% from 20% at pre-survey to 35% at post-survey. By contrast, children in the control group did not make these gains during the same time period; reading enjoyment levels in this group only increased slightly from 59% at pre-survey to 64% at post-survey.

Table 5: Reading enjoyment

		Not at all	A bit	Quite a lot	Very much	Overall enjoyment ⁵
PRE	INTERVENTION	20	85	44	37	81
		10.8%	45.7%	23.7%	19.9%	43.6%
	CONTROL	6	20	17	20	37
		9.5%	31.7%	27.0%	31.7%	58.7%
POST	INTERVENTION	9	55	58	65	123
		4.8%	29.4%	31.0%	34.8%	65.8%
	CONTROL	7	15	21	18	39
		11.5%	24.6%	34.4%	29.5%	63.9%

While there were no significant differences by gender or FSM uptake in the intervention group over time, we are highlighting findings here as they are still interesting. We hope that future evaluations with larger sample sizes will be able to help unpick the intricacies of the relationships.

Children who receive FSMs appear to benefit from the programme in terms of reading enjoyment. Both children who receive FSMs and those who do not receive FSMs enjoy reading more at the end of the programme, but children who receive FSMs show slightly larger gains than their peers. Children who do not receive FSMs went

⁴ Repeated measures ANOVA: $F(1,240) = 7.938$, $MSE = .350$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .059$; PLRS children pre: $M = 2.52$ ($SD = .932$), post: $M = 2.94$ ($SD = .917$); Control children pre: $M = 2.88$ ($SD = .982$), post: $M = 2.80$ ($SD = .988$).

⁵ Combines "quite a lot" and "very much"

from 45% to 65%, an increase of 20 percentage points. By contrast, children who receive FSMs progressed from 37% who enjoy reading to 65% over the course of the programme, an increase of 28 percentage points. Indeed, at the end of the project, an identical percentage of children who receive FSMs enjoy reading as their more advantaged peers. This suggests that the enjoyment gap between FSM pupils and their peers has closed at the end of the programme.

Boys appear to benefit in terms of reading enjoyment from taking part in PLRS. There was a 74% increase in the number of boys who enjoy reading over the course of the programme, rising from 38% at pre-survey to 69% at post-survey. By contrast, the gain is much smaller for girls, increasing from 56% to 61% over the same period. So while more girls than boys enjoyed reading at pre-survey, after PLRS, more boys enjoy reading than girls who also did the intervention⁶.

Besides enjoyment of reading, there was also a significant⁷ difference over time in the degree to which children agreed that “reading is cool” depending on whether or not they took part in PLRS activities, with children who took part in PLRS being more likely to think that reading is cool at the end of the project than children who didn’t take part in PLRS.

For example, when exploring this change in percentages, Table 6 shows that in the post-survey 60.8% of children and young people agree with the statement “reading is cool”, as opposed to 56.6% before, while the control group only shows a small change from 61.9% to 63.8% over the same period.

Table 6: “Reading is cool”

		Overall agreement ⁸	I strongly agree	I agree	Neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
PRE	INTERVENTION	103	38	65	39	23	17
		56.6%	20.9%	35.7%	21.4%	12.6%	9.3%
	CONTROL	39	12	27	11	9	4
		61.9%	19.0%	42.9%	17.5%	14.3%	6.3%
POST	INTERVENTION	110	48	62	47	13	11
		60.8%	26.5%	34.3%	26.0%	7.2%	6.1%
	CONTROL	37	11	26	9	6	6
		63.8%	19.0%	44.8%	15.5%	10.3%	10.3%

Children taking part in PLRS are also more likely to embrace being a reader at the end of the programme than children from the control group as there was a significant⁹ difference over time in the degree to which children agreed that “I am proud to be a reader” depending on whether or not they were taking part in PLRS.

For example, Table 7 illustrates this change in percentages and shows that 71% of PLRS pupils agree with the statement “I’m proud that I’m a reader” in the pre-survey, and 77% agree in the post-survey. By contrast, the percentage of children in the control group who say that they are proud to be a reader decreases from 79% to 73% over the same period of time.

Table 7: “I’m proud that I’m a reader”

		Overall agreement ¹⁰	I strongly agree	I agree	Neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
PRE	INTERVENTION	125	48	77	27	18	6
		71.1%	27.3%	43.8%	15.3%	10.2%	3.4%

⁶ The difference between boys and girls over time in their enjoyment of reading is just not significant: repeated measures ANOVA $F(1, 178) = 3.456$, $MSE = .341$, $p = .065$; $\eta_p^2 = .019$; Boys pre: $M = 2.42$ ($SD = .916$), post: $M = 2.93$ ($SD = .880$); girls pre: $M = 2.72$ ($SD = .951$), post: $M = 2.98$ ($SD = .991$)

⁷ Repeated measures ANOVA: $F(1,228) = 4.386$, $MSE = .444$, $p = .037$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$; PLRS children pre: $M = 2.57$ ($SD = 1.124$), post: $M = 2.34$ ($SD = 1.133$); Control children pre: $M = 2.42$ ($SD = 1.148$), post: $M = 2.49$ ($SD = 1.233$).

⁸ Combines “strongly agree” and “agree”

⁹ Repeated measures ANOVA: $F(1,217) = 3.975$, $MSE = .524$, $p = .047$, $\eta_p^2 = .018$; PLRS children pre: $M = 2.15$ ($SD = 1.055$), post: $M = 1.96$ ($SD = .934$); Control children pre: $M = 2.02$ ($SD = 1.043$), post: $M = 2.14$ ($SD = 1.301$).

¹⁰ Combines “strongly agree” with “agree”

POST	CONTROL	48	20	28	8	2	3
		78.7%	32.8%	45.9%	13.1%	3.3%	4.9%
	INTERVENTION	133	65	68	27	8	5
		76.9%	37.6%	39.3%	15.6%	4.6%	2.9%
	CONTROL	44	22	22	5	5	6
		73.4%	36.7%	36.7%	8.3%	8.3%	10.0%

While there was no significant difference between PRLS and control group children in the degree to which children agreed that reading is more for girls over time, and while there was no significant difference between boys' and girls' responses over time, there is still an interesting trend with respect to gender that is worth highlighting. Table 8 shows that before PLRS, girls tended to agree with the statement more than boys (28% vs 22%). While both boys and girls are less likely to agree with the statement after the programme, girls are even more likely than boys to disagree (62% vs 56%).

Table 8: "Reading is more for girls than boys" by gender within the intervention group

		I strongly agree	I agree	Neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
PRE	Boy	13	13	27	27	39
		10.9%	10.9%	22.7%	22.7%	32.8%
	Girl	7	10	13	19	12
		11.5%	16.4%	21.3%	31.1%	19.7%
POST	Boy	11	6	32	26	38
		9.7%	5.3%	28.3%	23.0%	33.6%
	Girl	3	5	15	19	19
		4.9%	8.2%	24.6%	31.1%	31.1%

3.2 Better book-choosing skills and use of school library

There also was a significant¹¹ difference over time in the frequency with which PLRS and non-PLRS children use the school library, with children who did not take part in PLRS being less likely to use the school library over the course of the project.

Table 9 shows that children who did not take part in PLRS were less likely to use the school library over the few months that elapse between the pre and post surveys: from 39% of children who say they visited the school library four times in a month, to only 24% at the time of the post survey. By contrast, the percentage of PLRS children who used the school library at least four times a month remained stable over the same time period.

Table 9: School library visits

		I haven't been at all	Once or twice	Three or four times	More than four times
PRE	INTERVENTION	17	58	53	58
		9.1%	31.2%	28.5%	31.2%
	CONTROL	9	15	15	25
		14.1%	23.4%	23.4%	39.1%
POST	INTERVENTION	25	54	47	61
		13.4%	28.9%	25.1%	32.6%
	CONTROL	17	20	10	15
		27.4%	32.3%	16.1%	24.2%

While the difference in the frequency with which FSM and non-FSM children use the school library over time was not significant, Table 10 highlights an interesting trend. While the percentage of non-FSM pupils who had used the school library more than four times in the past month had remained relatively stable, the percentage of children

¹¹ Repeated measures ANOVA: $F(1,243) = 7.685$, $MSE = .641$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .031$; PLRS children pre: $M = 2.83$ ($SD = 0.985$), post: $M = 2.75$ ($SD = 1.048$); Control children pre: $M = 2.90$ ($SD = 1.097$), post: $M = 2.37$ ($SD = 1.134$).

on FSM who had used the school library more than four times a month increased from 23% to 35% after taking part in PLRS.

Table 10: School library visits by FSM

		I haven't been at all	Once or twice	Three or four times	More than four times
PRE	FSM	6	11	20	11
		12.5%	22.9%	41.7%	22.9%
	Non-FSM	11	43	31	45
		8.5%	33.1%	23.8%	34.6%
POST	FSM	7	12	12	17
		14.6%	25.0%	25.0%	35.4%
	Non-FSM	16	40	32	42
		12.3%	30.8%	24.6%	32.3%

In focus group discussions, children display their awareness of many different types of reading materials.

"I like reading comics! I like reading cartoons."

(Boy, PRU)

"I like to read Xbox magazines. There's the pictures, and all that."

(Boy, PRU)

"Particularly graphic novels. I like them because they're very serious."

(Boy, PRU)

"I liked the actual reading [during PLRS activities] because it wasn't books."

(Boy, secondary school)

"Magazines are more fun than books. Yeah, because if you read them, it's more interesting than books because it has all the football players that played, and then died, but they're still talking about them in the magazines. Because they give you more facts about the football players than books."

(Boy, primary school)

3.3 Children's reading preferences and awareness of different reading materials

Practitioners who were interviewed spontaneously mentioned how children discover that reading is more than just reading books. They can also discover a wide range of reading materials and reading genres through the programme, especially non-fiction, which is very popular with the participants.

"I think it's had an impact on how they view reading. Obviously, at the beginning, you talk a lot about how reading is not just books, and for a lot of them... that's new to them! The fact that you can read a magazine or texts on your phone or Facebook means you're still reading. Suddenly, PLRS takes away the stigma of reading."

(English teacher, PRU)

"He was struggling to find the ones, but then he got into Gangsta Granny. We got him some David Walliams books and he really got into that. But I don't think he could have had that confidence to go and pick Gangsta Granny if it hadn't been for the little group work we did for PLRS. I think we notice it more when we go to the library. When we went there and looked around, they couldn't find a lot of books about football. I think that's how they saw it: there wasn't much that they could be interested in. Whereas, after the library visit [programme fixture], they were looking at other books as well. It wasn't all about football any more. I think that was good."

(School librarian, primary school)

"And they started going to the school library. I'm around the library anyway, so I see them there and they come talk to me when they look around. And one of the PLRS sessions talks about how to choose a book. How children can choose a book. So it's good to try out something new."
(Learning assistant, primary school)

"It introduces them to a range of books very quickly. They quickly realise what they like to read. And especially for someone like J, reading match reports and realising that that's reading was quite a big thing."
(English teacher, PRU)

"There are lots of chances around this school for the children to pick their own books. But some of the boys were quite hesitant. And not confident in choosing their own books, and perhaps not knowing how to choose their own books. So we sort of take it for granted that they're going to take the books and choose the right ones, but they don't. Whereas this has taught them now to look for different things in the books."
(School librarian, primary school)

"Yeah, the football annuals and stuff, they don't realise that that's reading! Reading things on the internet, or things like that. They didn't realise that that's reading. But that's changed now."
(School librarian, primary school)

"And, really, reading on the computer, they don't think of it as reading. You give them a book, and the book goes out the window or under the chair. But they can sit and focus on the screen."
(English teacher, PRU)

"They really enjoyed looking for and reading information rather than reading fiction. We did give them the whole variety of text, and autobiographies were quite popular. Like, we had the autobiography of Denis Law, who's a footballer from the '60s. They were picking it up, and they didn't know who he was, but they looked at the presentation and the features and started reading it and loved it."
(English teacher, secondary school)

"Yeah, they look for facts about footballers. That's what they're interested in. But they don't realise that reading is not just books. With PLRS, they've seen along the way that reading a poster, that's reading. Something that catches their eye, that's reading."
(PE teacher, primary school)

Indeed, participation in the programme has impacted on children's reading volume as analyses indicate a significant¹² difference in the number of books that children have read over time depending on whether they took part in PLRS activities or not. In particular, children who take part in PLRS read more books at the end of activities, while children in the control group read fewer books over the same period.

Table 11 explores that change in percentages and shows that while 12% of children who took part in PLRS said that they had read more than 10 books in the past month in the pre-survey, the percentage almost doubles in the post-survey, where 20% of participants say they have read more than 10 books. Meanwhile, in the control group, the proportion of children who choose that response decreases from 23% to 17.5%.

Table 11: Number of books read in the past month

		Less than one	One or two	Three or four	Five or six	Seven or eight	Nine or 10	More than 10
PRE	INTERVENTION	21	47	47	35	9	6	22
		11.2%	25.1%	25.1%	18.7%	4.8%	3.2%	11.8%
	CONTROL	7	9	14	12	5	2	15
		10.9%	14.1%	21.9%	18.8%	7.8%	3.1%	23.4%

¹² Repeated measures ANOVA: $F(1,245) = 12.311$, $MSE = 1.506$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .048$; PLRS children pre: $M = 3.36$ ($SD = 1.759$), post: $M = 3.76$ ($SD = 2.037$); Control children pre: $M = 4.06$ ($SD = 2.015$), post: $M = 3.57$ ($SD = 1.940$).

POST	INTERVENTION	22	40	38	26	14	9	38
		11.8%	21.4%	20.3%	13.9%	7.5%	4.8%	20.3%
	CONTROL	8	12	18	9	4	1	11
		12.7%	19.0%	28.6%	14.3%	6.3%	1.6%	17.5%

While there was no significant difference over time in the degree to which PLRS or non-PLRS children agreed that they prefer reading to watching TV, and while there were no significant differences over time for children who receive FSMs and those who do not, our data suggest some positive behaviour changes that are worth noting. For example, children who receive FSMs become more likely to agree with the statement “I prefer reading to watching TV”, increasing from 28% to 42%. They also become more likely to agree with the statement “I encourage my friends to read”, increasing from 43% before PLRS to 50% after the programme. The same is true for young people in secondary school, with 20% agreeing with the statement beforehand and 28% agreeing after taking part in PLRS.

What the survey does not tell us is what the children are now reading and how. This was examined face to face during group discussions.

“If there’s really good horror... Like, really good horror... Then you won’t put it down, because it’ll be so good.”

(Boy, PRU)

“Peppa Pig. It’s the worst book ever. Baby books are worst than anything.”

(Girl, PRU)

“Big books are better. Like, this big. Bigger is better. Small books are boring. Big books they like... they excite you! They scare you or something. More things happen, it’s less boring.”

(Girl, primary school)

“My favourite book is probably Tom Gates, actually.”

(Boy, secondary school)

“My favourite book is actually the Diary of a Wimpy Kid.”

(Boy, secondary school)

“I like reading, but it depends... I don’t like reading normal books. I like reading fun books like comedy books, or books or adventure, like Tom Palmer, because they’re fun. Because they’re different.”

(Boy, primary school)

“In the middle you have to have a problem and then in the end it gets solved. That’s how you know the book is good. Because then it’s interesting. Maybe a homeless person, and then he has a shed to live in. For example.”

(Boy, primary school)

What makes Harry Potter interesting?

“Interesting words. He’s famous. It’s got many characters. That makes it more fun. You can’t believe it that’s in a book. He’s never been in a book. He can’t believe he’s in a book. He can’t believe that he’s that famous. Because at the start he’s normal, until he finds out that he’s a wizard and all these things happen.”

(Primary school group)

“Gangsta Granny is interesting because what happens in it is that the granny she’s just trying to please her nephew, so what she did is that she goes and steals some jewellery like the crown jewels. And that’s interesting because you wouldn’t see a grandma do that.”

(Girl, primary school)

“Because you know some books, it feels like the author is talking to you, like ‘carry on if you dare’. That’s what makes it more fun, because it’s like it’s happening to you; the author is talking to you.”

(Girl, primary school)

3.4 Attainment and skills progress

Progress on attainment and technical literacy skills also come up in interviews with project coordinators as one of the positive impacts of PLRS.

"There has been a lot of progress. Like, C, when she was tested last, her reading age was eight years old, and she's gone up to about 12."

(English teacher, PRU)

"We developed some skills: skimming and scanning. We developed kids' ability, even on basic things, like inference and deduction. These would be the two areas where we made good progress."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"Where pupils made progress, they've made considerable process, so they've moved forward by 14 months, compared to the control group, which has slightly better results, and moved forward by four months. So that is a positive."

(School librarian, secondary school)

"To him it's made a lot of difference. It really helped him with his reading, and anything to do with literacy."

(English teacher, PRU)

"We don't use NC sublevels any more, but when we did, we saw clear progress in sublevels and APS points, and stuff like that. Nowadays we measure it [reading levels] in terms of all the PLRS children meeting expectations in terms of reading, and some of them went into the 'exceeding' bracket as well. So you can measure it this way with hard data."

(Head of school, primary school)

"So in terms of story-writing, for instance. We've worked on their writing in PLRS, and they're writing stories based on what they learned in PLRS during their class. We've sorted out their writing and their grammar. The teachers can clearly see the progress! The teachers are coming to me saying 'Can we do one for the Year 3, can we do one for the Year 4?'"

(PE teacher, primary school)

"And also, the new English exam, a lot of it is response to unseen passages. So that's brilliant! For our students who do go on to GCSEs, by doing the online challenges they really prepare."

(English teacher, PRU)

The online surveys reveal that children who took part in the programme do feel more confident about their skills as readers, as analyses show a significant¹³ difference in the degree to which PLRS and non-PLRS children feel confident in their reading ability over time.

Table 12 illustrates this change in percentages and shows that at pre-survey 63.5% of PLRS children say they feel confident or very confident about reading, while 80.5% say the same in the post-survey. By contrast, over the same period the percentage of pupils who feel confident about their reading in the control group has remained stable at around 80%. These data suggest that PLRS has helped less confident readers to catch up with their peers.

Table 12: Reading confidence

		Not at all confident	Not too confident	Confident	Very confident	Confident and very confident
PRE	INTERVENTION	17	51	79	39	118
		9.1%	27.4%	42.5%	21.0%	63.5%
	CONTROL	4	9	24	27	51
		6.3%	14.1%	37.5%	42.2%	79.7%

¹³ Repeated measures ANOVA: $F(1,238) = 6.151$, $MSE = .365$, $p = .014$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$; PLRS children pre: $M = 2.75$ ($SD = .898$), post: $M = 23.13$ ($SD = .841$); Control children pre: $M = 3.15$ ($SD = .909$), post: $M = 3.21$ ($SD = .858$).

POST	INTERVENTION	9	27	80	68	148
		4.9%	14.7%	43.5%	37.0%	80.5%
	CONTROL	3	8	23	27	50
		4.9%	13.1%	37.7%	44.3%	82%

The difference in boys' and girls' confidence over time was just not significant¹⁴. It is nonetheless noteworthy that boys go from 61% being confident about reading to 80%, and girls go from 68% to 80% as well. So again, while girls were more confident than boys before taking part in PLRS, it appears as though the programme has narrowed the gap so that both boys and girls are confident about their reading.

In the group discussions, the children spend a lot of time discussing book sizes and reading levels.

"Because if you read a book, and some books are easier, and if you have less time you can read a small book. That's why I like to read because if there's a small book, I like to read it, so I can read it quicker."
(Girl, primary school)

"In my opinion, I think we should read big books. Because they're big books they make us read more."
(Boy, primary school)

"In my opinion, I think big books are better than small books, because small books are for babies, and then the story you read it too quick. But big books are a particular good read."
(Girl, primary school)

"I think small books are better than big books, because small books you can finish quickly, and big books you're going to read them for days, so that means small books are easy and you can understand it, but the big books when you read them like... it gets on your brain."
(Boy, primary school)

3.5 Linking attitudes and attainment

Further, teachers make a clear link between improved attitudes and improved attainment. It is clear to practitioners that children who enjoy reading are children who perform better in class, whether English or other subjects. Whether or not progress can immediately be seen after 10 weeks of PLRS, teachers are confident that literacy skills do and will improve further thanks to the switch in attitudes caused by the programme.

"In English, I only have three or four from that group, but anything that makes reading and literacy fun, it's going to make a difference in the classroom. Definitely, our Y7 have made some of the most rapid progress in reading. In our testing of those kids, some of them have made a year and four months progress in their reading."
(School librarian, secondary school)

"My problem is, I don't think we've quite cracked: 'Here's kid A, who's a nightmare in lessons, has done PLRS, is still a nightmare in lessons, but now he can also produce fantastic work.' You know, it's not a straight-forward graph-like result, is it? But... I think gradually more and more, with the new curriculum and all that sort of stuff, people are having to pay more attention to attitudes and that sort of stuff. But that's very difficult to measure."
(Head teacher, secondary school)

"But I think their attitude will help the progress. It all feeds into each other. Having a good attitude towards reading will help them read better and will improve their skills."
(School librarian, primary school)

¹⁴ $F(1, 175) = 2.927$, $p = .089$, $MSE = .353$, $\eta_p^2 = .016$. Boys pre: $M = 2.68$ ($SD = .919$), post: $M = 3.14$ ($SD = .874$); girls pre: $M = 2.89$ ($SD = .858$), post: $M = 3.11$ ($SD = .798$)

"You can see the progress. Obviously it's not just PLRS, they do other things. But PLRS keeps them engaged in what they're doing."

(PE teacher, primary school)

"We get students who hate English, completely turned off to English. Reading... A lot of it is confidence and self-esteem."

(English teacher, PRU)

"I think PLRS works because it works on getting children enthusiastic first. If you work on attitudes first, then skills come naturally after that. Whereas other interventions work on skill building, and then tough, you don't have to like it! But this is around the back door intervention and it just works better. You don't have to drag the children up the hill. It's always easier when they're just coming along with you because they want to see what's at the top."

(Head teacher, primary school)

Most interviewees are also confident that the positive impact of PLRS on children's attitudes is durable, and that the effects of the programme will be long-lasting, despite the short duration of the intervention.

"I've had kids that were on it last year, that weren't on it this year that still come to me and want books. There was one who we didn't include in PLRS this year and he was so upset. But I told him he could still get books! And he just kept coming to me to get books. So it just carries on going. And mom came over as well saying that he doesn't read at home anymore because he doesn't have these books. So we gave him more books. So it works. It does, it's proof!"

(PE teacher, primary school)

"They're on that journey now. Yes, because the resources will always be here, the books will always be here, the great teachers, the great staff are here. It's having that confidence to go and get the books from the bookshelf, and take it home to read it, and talk about it. But that doesn't go. So they've got everything they need now to access. Whereas before, they didn't have that confidence. And I don't think that'll go."

(School librarian, primary school)

3.6 Beyond reading: what PLRS can do to promote learning and positive behaviours in school

The improved attitudes that are noticeable in the PLRS group are not always translated in the classroom: while children behave well and show enthusiasm in the special PLRS group, outside class, with fun activities and the promise of football, they might revert to negative behaviours. In primary school, it does seem that teachers who do not deliver PLRS but work with the children in regular classroom activities can see the changes and the progress in class, including for writing and for speaking and listening.

"The teachers, they notice a huge difference in the majority of them. A huge difference. There's this kid, she was really quiet, never getting involved. Now she takes part, she speaks up. This other, a little boy, he's Spanish. It's helped him so much with his English. His English is getting there. He's our top blogger now, for the school. He writes stories on there every day. And now the teachers look at the blog to see how their writing is going."

(PE teacher, primary school)

"From other teachers, we've heard about their confidence in choosing books and taking books home more, and talking about books. That was the big difference."

(School librarian, primary school)

Interviewees who work in secondary schools are less sure about it.

"And we need to make sure the kids are transferring their excellent behaviour from PLRS into the classroom."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

But what most practitioners describe in detail is a change in the children's relationship to school and to learning in general. According to the feedback from practitioners, the PLRS programme not only switches students to reading, but it can also provide a way to improve children's relationship with school in general, especially in young people who are disengaged with learning. Indeed, practitioners point out that difficulties with literacy can be symptomatic and/or the cause of wider difficulties with school as a whole. When PLRS shows pupils that they can both learn and have fun at the same time, it opens up the opportunity for these students' relationship with their teachers and with school to improve.

"PLRS came along and this is another empowering exercise."

(Head of school, primary school)

"But I think general attitudes in terms of learning and attendance and reading, within the actual sessions themselves, we have noticed some massive changes among these pupils. Yeah, good attendance with the ones who completed. We started with about 16, which in hindsight might be a bit too many. We ended with about 12. And they came on time, every time, even to the barbecue on Saturday."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"Yes, it's helping them on both reading and writing. And speaking and listening. Especially for this little Spanish kid because when he came in he didn't speak a word of English. And then you saw him in the group discussion and he was the one who was talking the most. We couldn't shut him up! His speaking and listening in English is fine now. Didn't speak a word of English when he got here. Then he did PLRS. And it's helped him more and more and more."

(PE teacher, primary school)

"The great thing now is when my colleague and I [who delivered PLRS] come in contact with these kids, we're off to a flyer, aren't we? These troublesome kids aren't going to be troublesome for us. In a positive way, you know, rather than me doing the SLT, regular detention stuff. They greet us in the corridor, you know? They come out of their way with their mates to come out and say hi to us. And that's great! We've developed this sort of sphere of influence now in the English department. I think that having just got that buy-in allows us to start using that as a basis to get the kids to academic performance."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"But it's their feelings towards school in general, towards learning."

(English teacher, secondary school)

"The first group was hard work. We had boys who could be a bit silly sometimes. Those first sessions, oh my god... But at the end, they had completely changed! They were really involved. They were so much better behaved and they paid attention. They were a lot more engaged."

(Librarian, primary school)

4. What makes PLRS work

The evaluation was not only seeking to establish whether PLRS is a successful intervention for struggling readers, but we are also investigating why it does or does not work. Expectedly, since PLRS achieves some very positive outcomes for pupils, most aspects of the programme come up in the list of what makes it successful. They commend the general approach of the programme, its practical applications, and the important buy-in and support from the Premier League

4.1 An excellent approach

The positive aspects of PLRS, when interviewing practitioners, seem endless. Adults who delivered PLRS with young people can come up with a long list of unique aspects, which they believe make PLRS an effective, original and successful intervention with pupils.

Using football as a way in by latching on pupils' interests

"Something that mixes sports and literacy, that really works!"
(English teacher, PRU)

"Using football in a reading intervention, that's not common, not common at all. It's unusual."
(Head teacher, secondary)

"A lot of reluctant readers, in my experience, are boys. And a lot of boys also like football. So to merge the two together, it just makes sense. But we had never used that before."
(English teacher, secondary school)

"The vital, the crucial thing about PLRS is all the football-related stuff. That is where young people, and particularly boys, really take an interest. It's incredibly valuable. It uses the things that they're already interested in to get them turned on with the idea of reading. The dynamics of every group will be different."
(School librarian, secondary school)

"It's been great for them to do something that's linked to football, especially the boys."
(English teacher, PRU)

"So when you get the kids coming and you make it about something they like, you can't go wrong."
(PE teacher, primary school)

Competition

"And they walk into this classroom and they see the chart up there on the wall with all the stickers for all the online challenges that they've completed, with their names and the rewards they get, and they go 'When did you get to do that? That's not fair, I want to do it too!' They're very competitive and they push one another."
(English teacher, PRU)

"And adding a competitive edge to it works quite well. We did a task where we set out all the magazines... We had all the annuals, the kind of things they'd get for Christmas, which the staff donated. That was great. So we did two teams and they had post-its, and they had to read the magazine or annual and they had to pick up facts about anything and write it on the post-it note and stick them on the pillars of the library. Then the other team had to find the post-it notes and figure out where the fact was coming from by flicking through all the magazines. So they were looking through all the books trying to find a fact and discovering some new ones at the same time."
(English teacher, secondary school)

Capitalising on peers and group dynamics

"It is the power of the group, the peer-group, the fact that they do it together."
(PE teacher, primary school)

"Especially in a small school like this, they always have one or two kids they look up to. And if they get into it, then everyone else will get into it as well. The two or three times we've run it, there's always one or two pupils who really get into it, and even if they're not the 'top dogs' that everyone looks up to, you can still see the rest follow."
(English teacher, PRU school)

"We had one lad who didn't actually like football. But he enjoyed it. He enjoyed being with his friends, and enjoyed the whole experience, and playing football."
(School librarian, secondary school)

"A lot of the boys were helping the girls, which was really important. All joining in together, everybody was trying to contribute. I think it was really good. It went really well!"
(Learning assistant, primary school)

Informal and fun activities

"But we had to market it as 'this is not going to look like any lesson you've ever had in English', in order to get the buy in."
(Head of school, secondary school)

"The activities that work the most are feeling like you're at a football game. The chanting, the competition etc. It might feel like it's not highbrow literacy, but with the kids in that group it really works. What feels like a game. Something that feels like a group game, like a bit of drama, they absolutely love it."
(School librarian, secondary school)

"We did take it quite informally. When we first had the group, we did some penalty shoot outs, you know. They know who we are in school, but they don't think of us as teachers or anything. We did play football in that first session. We did those penalties. And that seemed to settle them in, didn't it?"
(School librarian, primary school)

"Yes, PLRS is completely separate from the English classes. I think that was one of the ideas at the beginning of the programme. We didn't want to get the kids into the library and say this is an additional lesson after school. Because they would have completely disengaged. So we wanted to make it sound like something fun, something that was almost a privilege for them. I think it made much more of an impact on them than if it had been regular lessons."
(English teacher, secondary school)

Relevant to the curriculum

"But the reading you see underpins everything. That's why we're so passionate about it. We've got math-worded problems, science, and all the other subjects... One of the things we're worried about, as a school, is that 10% of their GCSE grades in every subject are going to come down to the quality of writing. So that's something that, with reading stars, I'd like to develop 'reading and writing' stars."
(Head teacher, secondary school)

"And the curriculum changed last year to include enjoyment and confidence as part of literacy teaching and attainment."
(Head of school, primary school)

It should be noted that the sustainability of the PLRS impacts also depends on the school's ability to keep the momentum going. Once children have discovered new genres they like, the school library has to be able to supply them with the books they want to read. Likewise, if children discover they enjoy magazines or comics, they need to find enough of them to read when they are in school. This requires practitioners who deliver the programme to communicate successfully with the English department, the school library, and other relevant staff members in school. They also need knowledge, in terms of which texts to supply, and access to sufficient budget.

Children also have a lot of positive feedback on PLRS and how much they enjoyed the experience.

"We did reading! We did acting! All things to do with football. We had our own special club. We did all things to do with football. We had our own writing books. And at the end of each session, we would play football."

(Boy, secondary school)

"Yeah! We just had to read scripts and act out... We had to read a poem and then act it out at one point. And we did quizzes!"

(Boy, secondary school)

"My favourite activity was... all of it. I enjoyed all of it. I just liked all of it, it was all brilliant and fun."

(Boy, secondary school)

"Actually, we would do 30 minutes of football and 30 minutes of everything else. Oh yeah, I liked the activity when we did the reading."

(Boy, secondary school)

"I liked it. Because we can play football and use the computers. We didn't read that many books."

(Boy, secondary school)

"It was fun. I want to do it again."

(Boy, secondary school)

"We did so many activities! Learning about reading and learning about football. We played football. We played in groups."

(Girl, primary school)

"So with all the activities, it's like I like reading but also I like football as well."

(Boy, primary school)

"We had all these books and we could put post-it notes to say if we liked them or not and what was special about them and what we liked about them."

(Girl, primary school)

Children were also asked to describe a footballer (as someone they look up to) in their own words, and a reader, and which they identified more with. The exercise was a little difficult but pushed the children to think about their representations of readers and footballers.

Generally, they tend to describe footballers with superlatives or extremely positive words: *the best, legend and legendary, incredible, king, super skill, best in the universe, amazing, awesome, incredible*; and with words which describe physical strength: *fast, powerful, muscly/muscular, quick, strong, skilful, tall, fit, competitive, energetic* (as well as *sweaty* and *stinky*). Finally, terms pertaining to wealth and fame came up as well: *rich, famous, millionaires/billionaires, swag, handsome, cool*.

As for readers, children really struggled to describe them as they do not seem to have a clear representation of what a reader should be like. So there is a mix of neutral descriptive terms: *good at reading books, good at reading football books, likes reading poetry, tall or short, feels like he is in a book, normal, some readers become writers, any person who reads books, readers read a lot, knows how to read*; some negative words also come up in the range of what is fairly expectable: *nerd/nerdy, geeky, quiet, books are boring, people who write books are boring*,

people who read books are weird, some readers don't have friends, not sociable, not muscly because reading all day. But on the other hand, we get just as many positive terms which tend to have more to do with intellect: intelligent and smart, fun (not a lot), fun and funny, clever, writes good books, good future, good job, intellectual, make friends, adventurous, interesting, cool, imaginative, international, knowledgeable. Interestingly, readers read books, not magazines, comics, or newspapers, or other reading materials, which mirrors findings we made in large samples of children and young people in 2008¹⁵.

What really came out of the discussions, however, is how children did not have a fixed representation of readers and struggled to come up with traditional stereotypes, whether positive or negative. So it is more a matter of preferences, between children who enjoy playing and watching football (they play it more than they watch it) and children who enjoy reading. But they can be quite respectful of one another and of their preferences. Most children actually insist that readers could play football and do exercise too, that anyone could be a reader, and that footballers could be readers too:

"They only read to their children. If they have children, they read to them."

(Boy, secondary school)

"If there's a contract, they have to read it."

(Boy, secondary school)

"Anyone that reads can be a reader. If you pick up a book, then you're a reader. They can be any gender."

(Boy, PRU)

"Footballers are famous. And the readers. Like, if they're writers, then they're famous."

(Girl, primary school)

"Because anyone could play football. Like if they're a reader, they can read a book, but you don't know, they might like football as well. You don't know, if a person is a writer, they could be strong as well, because you don't know."

(Girl, primary school)

Representations of footballers tend to be more rigid. They only make room for famous footballers, and what is visible of their lives in the media. So while readers are embedded in reality and can be more or less anybody, with the only criteria being "reading books", footballers are more removed from the children's experience, making them both unattainable and worthy of admiration at the same time.

Children were asked in the survey whether they thought that footballers read. The number of children in the intervention group who believe that footballers definitely read doubled over the course of the project, increasing from 33.7% at pre-survey to 62.1% at post-survey. By contrast, while more children in the control group also believe that footballers definitely read over the same period, the increase is more muted (from 20.3% to 26.6%).

Table 13: Do you think footballers read?

		Yes, definitely	No, I'm sure they don't	Yes, maybe they do
PRE	INTERVENTION	62	18	104
		33.7%	9.8%	56.5%
	CONTROL	13	10	41
		20.3%	15.6%	64.1%
POST	INTERVENTION	118	10	62
		62.1%	5.3%	32.6%
	CONTROL	17	9	38
		26.6%	14.1%	59.4%

¹⁵ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt_research/268_young_peoples_self-perceptions_as_readers

4.2 Positive feedback on programme delivery

Besides the very positive feedback that practitioners give on the PLRS approach, there is also a lot of talk about the specifics of the programme. Interviewees praise the fact that it is easy to use and to access, cost-effective, the training is useful, and the fixtures are well designed, while remaining flexible enough to allow schools to be creative.

"I really like the programme. We did it last year and we had a teacher run it last year in the library and I was just assisting. I like the structure, the ideas that are there for each week. I like the way it's easily manageable, especially for a classroom teacher. Any teacher could run with the stuff that you provide without any difficulty. It creates participation, rather than issues of planning and preparation. And that's why we've paid to do it again this year."

(School librarian, secondary school)

"It's an easy task to adjust to, really you just read the book, you know the guide. It just tells you what to do. It doesn't say 'you have to follow this book'. But the guide in it is really great. It's simple! I love the fixtures! We've had other schools come in and watch us do it, because they like the way we do it. People just need a kick-start, and then it will just kick off. A lot of people in other schools are reluctant to do it, just because they don't know how to do it. We had a couple of schools coming in, and they said 'Oh this is pretty easy, actually, we can just do it, and we can do it as we want it.' So... Because they've never done it before, they see the big pack, and they've never met Jim or anyone, so they don't fully understand. They just heard about it and went in for it. But when they see how it's run and how easy it is to run, I mean, the kids maintain it all! They got their badges. They want to keep their badges. They collect each other up, and then come down and stay in the room. They come by themselves!"

(PE teacher, primary school)

Online challenges

"The newspapers is pretty good. The internet stuff especially, because that's the way society is going now, computers. Most things on computers work really well. That's why I added blogging in. Most computer-based stuff. The kids go straight to the online challenges. Some of them struggle to get on... I don't really know why. Because it's pretty straight-forward. But sometimes they do. They come and ask me 'Can we do the online challenges, can you come and put us on it?' So I go and show them. So that's outside of class. Then they have free time."

(PE teacher, primary school)

"The one thing that hasn't worked both years, and I don't know myself how to make it work better, is the online challenges. Both years, I found it difficult to get kids to take up these challenges independently. Most kids don't do them. They don't know about it that much, don't care, it doesn't really register with them. The one kid this year who was a nightmare did more than anyone. But most kids didn't see it as part of the programme. I feel that they needed countless reminders to have a look at them. It's about tackling things independently, and the bulk of our kids weren't willing to tackle anything independently. Maybe that's part of their problems as learners, but it was the same last year with the teacher who was involved. Because they're great! Listening to the players talk, it's a powerful thing, so I don't know why it didn't work for the kids. Some of them are clunky, but that stuff is really good."

(School librarian, secondary school)

"Some of them really enjoyed doing it on the website, even doing it at home later. And again, we made it available in school. We had the laptop out so they could do it whenever."

(School librarian, primary school)

Cost

"Definitely! It's about £200 for the whole pack. It's just a bargain! I mean, for the number of children, we've got 22 per session, and we change it every 10 weeks, so if you compare that to the cost of say a

reading recovery intervention, which is very labour intensive, not cost effective in terms of time, and very particular about which children it can be aimed towards..."

(Head of school, primary school)

"Another massive advantage of PLRS, from the Excel spread-sheet point of view, which prevails in the senior leadership corridor, is the fact that's it's very cheap. It is comparatively very very cheap."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

Training

"I think the training day was good! The one that Jim did."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"I went to a training session in Leicester in February and Jim was there. I think the tactic book would have been all right by itself, but going to the training made me feel part of a national programme and making me feel part of something worthwhile, like a shot in the arm. It feels great, you meet other people, you meet the players the authors, and that's excellent, it's an opportunity to get out of the school and be involved in big things."

(School librarian, secondary school)

Tactic book and fixtures

"Yeah, we tried to follow the fixture list as strictly as possible at the beginning. That kind of went downhill towards the end. Not in terms of the sessions, but we improvised a lot of the activities, but it worked quite well at times."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"The resources were pretty good; they were very detailed; the weekly tasks were really good. We were never really at a loss; there were always lots of little snappy things to do as well as the main topics. I think they were very useful and well done. I think it was very well set up on your end, the website is good, all the resources are good. I wouldn't have thought of doing freeze frame or stuff like that for a literacy programme. So it's really great to have the tactics book, which does all the thinking for you. So that was a useful resource. Big time."

(School librarian, secondary school)

"But I don't think there's much we would change in terms of delivery. I'd be happy to go with this. Although it'd be great to have a different set of activities for next year, so they would do it again, but it would be slightly different. PLRS will become a standard Y7 activity."

(School librarian, secondary school)

Children were directly asked questions about what they thought of the programme fixtures on the online post-survey. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Table 14: Did you watch any of the films online of the players talking about what and why they enjoy reading?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	101	53.4%
No	88	46.6%
Total	189	100%

Table 15: What did you think of the films?

Good	14
Inspired or encouraged me to read	12
Okay	6
Alright	5
Amazing	4

every Wednesdays then I have got more time to actually understand my book and learn more about what's happening in the book ... but I am not that still keen to read books but I like to read some interesting books that my friends pick out for me as my friend A.H. loves reading."

"IT WAS SOOOOOOOO FUN I WISH I COUD DO THIS AGAN."

"I really enjoy being a reading star I think my reading has improved so much. And I also enjoy the challenges online."

We do know that there are many ways to deliver PLRS since it is a flexible intervention and it can adapt to settings, students, or practitioners. The difficulties of data collection, with attrition and lower than expected response rates, both from practitioners and students, mean that we cannot determine which methods of delivery lead to which outcomes. In future years, with more resources dedicated to evaluation, hopefully we can observe the different effects of delivery mechanisms, notably when PLRS is coupled with other reading interventions and when it is not, or when PLRS is delivered weekly or bi-weekly, for six weeks or for 10, group size and make-up etc.

4.3 The Premier League brand

The PL branding is a huge asset to the programme: practitioners identify it as a strong attraction to the programme and an important one as it gets the children interested from the beginning into a reading intervention in which they would otherwise be reluctant to be involved.

"The boys were really excited to join the group. It came with high status because it was PL, and it was very exciting. They enjoyed it a huge amount."

(School librarian, secondary school)

"I think they also like the fact that it's not a PRU thing. They know that it's not just done by us or designed by us, it's in mainstream schools, it's national. Often, in PRU, the kids can feel like they're different, that they're not part of what's going on with everyone else. And they desperately want to be part of everything. So I think that's also a big thing."

(English teacher, PRU)

"They love the badges."

(English teacher, PRU)

"And I think it's to do with the role-model thing, which is well researched. We know the importance, the influence of using sporting role models."

(PE teacher, primary school)

"Kids love having heroes, and anything that uses heroes will work well. It's a bit like comics. We also use comics in the library. When they think of all these great players, if that links to their school life and their reading life, it makes a huge difference."

(School librarian, secondary)

"And it's so special to them that they're in this squad."

(Head of school, primary)

"Yeah, I think what worked really well too was the sort of identity badges for PLRS. It sort of spread throughout the year group and we had other kids coming to us asking to be part of reading stars. We had a little delegation, didn't we, at one point! A whole team of kids asking 'Can we come on, sir?' I thought that was really powerful, and it really showed the power of the badge."

(Head teacher, secondary school)

"Here we have badges for prefects and seniority or presentation, so I asked permission if we could have these badges alongside the school ones. And they were very very proud. Some of them still wear them now and they're not taking them off. That's a powerful message." (Head teacher, secondary school)

Conclusion

The 2014-15 evaluation of PLRS provided us with a wealth of data on the outcomes of the programme for students, and some more detailed background about who the PLRS students are and why the intervention is successful for them.

In terms of outcomes on attitudes and behaviours, the programme has been very positive. It is thanks to the use of a comparison group that we are able to establish the direct outcomes of PLRS on participating students. Compared with their peers who didn't take part in PLRS, PLRS participants progress on the following:

- They become more likely to enjoy reading than before
- They feel more confident as readers than they did before PLRS
- They have more positive attitudes towards reading
- They start to perceive footballers as readers

Throughout the intervention, students have become more enthusiastic about reading, they have discovered new reading materials and new genres that they enjoy, and they have started to associate (often for the first time) literacy with entertaining activities such as football.

Practitioners also report an improvement in children's behaviour as their literacy skills and attitudes develop during the programme. According to descriptions from teachers and librarians who delivered the programme, children who are struggling with literacy or reading enjoyment (and therefore selected to take part in PLRS) are first and foremost children who are disengaged with school in general. Interviewed practitioners have been impressed by how engaged these children became thanks to PLRS: it provides them a unique chance to associate one of their favourite activities (football) with progress in literacy and to mix fun with learning.

As PLRS continues to develop as an offer from the National Literacy Trust in partnership with the Premier League, it would make sense to capitalise on the strengths of the programme by engaging clubs and footballers even more, by developing the online resources so the children can take PLRS home with them, and by extending the benefits of the interventions to other aspects of literacy such as writing, or speaking and listening. It is also up to schools to make the most of the intervention by giving disengaged students more opportunities to have fun while learning, and to read about things they love to keep their interest up after PLRS has switched them on to reading.

Annexes

Annex 1: Code list by order of frequency for qualitative data

Teachers

Table 19: Main themes in teacher interviews

Positive impact of PLRS	64
Profile of PLRS participants	32
Previous negative experiences with reading interventions	9
Difficulties at home or with parents	5
What makes PLRS work	39
Difficulties with implementation	31
PLRS delivery in schools (various approaches)	25
Positive child behaviours (evidence of positive change)	23
Positive feedback on fixtures or programme design	22
Importance of soft skills for reading attainment	15
Positive impact not directly related to reading	15
The trouble with demonstrating impact	12
What influences children	10
Premier League brand	10
Teachers' attitudes or teacher workload	10
General positive feedback	9
Relevance of PLRS to curriculum or school approach	8
Sports and literacy	7
Sustainability	6
Positive parental involvement	2

Children

Table 20: Main themes in children's FGD

Discriminating opinions about reading	44
Children's reading preferences	39
Reading and football	23
Positive feedback on PLRS	21
What makes good reading	16
Awareness of different reading materials and genres	13
Negative opinions about reading	11
Debates about book size	9
Positive opinions about reading	9
Premier League brand	9
Reading level and reading age	4
How to choose a book	3
Negative feedback on PLRS	3
Girls and football	2

Annex 2: Qualitative responses in online survey “Would you like to say anything about PLRS?”

awsome i loved it shame i cant go next year it was fun and got me rreading more awsome it was just amazing plus i loved the clips on the internet and the challenges were awsome i enjoyed it so much AMAZING JOB :]

Fun but some of the footballers could have talked a bit more

I enjoy premier league

I enjoyed it

i enjoyed it because we worked together and we got to have books that we never have read before like little mix that i read.

i found it really enjoying

I had fun and I like football

I had lots of fun and it's helped me read al lot and it made me confidend

I have a great time it helped me and make me more confident

I have enjoyed it and it has helped my reading and writing.

i like it because i make me read more

I like reading stars.

I liked all the lessons

I liked how they tried to persuade you to read their favourite books and some other books as well

i liked it

I liked it it helped me read a lot and it was fun

I liked it the magazine session

I liked that it helps students to improve their literacy in a fun way.

I liked the challenge of reading lots of books for the sticker chart

I liked the games and doing the online challenges

I liked the magazines and the warm ups

I liked the poetry session

I love It because it inspired me to read more

i love plrs I get to do it next year that's double th fun!!!!!!

i loved PLRS

i really enjoy being a reading star i think my reading has improved so much. and i also enjoy the challanges online.

I really enjoyed it and I feel like I have improved at reading

I really enjoyed the sessions and i want do more

I really enjoyed the trip and all the reading.

I really liked the warm ups

I think is a good idea because reading will improve your grammar and it will be fun.

I think it is a good idea because it gets children thinking and makes them want to read more in school and at home to there family

I think it is intresting and fun

I THINK ITS GOOD BECOUSE IT HELPS ME IN READIND

I think that it's a great idea and it's really enjoyable. Also it's a great way to make kids want to read more.
 I very love reading thanks for there work
 I want to do it again
 I wanted to carry on
 i will give it five stars
 I would love to do this again and it is really fun I loved it when we met dan freedman
 I would tell people to do it they get taken out of lessons to do this you get to go on trips
 it did help me find a book i like and enjoyed doing the reading as i found out a lot of facts
 it has really helped to push my reading to a hole new level so I think PLRS has been a brilliant experience for me
 It help my posh my read.
 It helped me read I've found out football read
 It is a good programme that encourages young children to develop a nature of reading.
 it is a great after school club
 It is an amazing group and I urges everyone to read
 it is awsome
 It is AWSOME COOL and it in coureg me to read more.
 it is fun
 it is good
 It is good.It made me more confident
 It is interesting and fun
 It is really fun to be in this club. I liked winning prizes for good answers.
 It is really good and I would like to do this more often sometime next year probably after 3 weeks
 it is the best thing in the world
 it makes you more confident about reading
 It really helped and i really liked it
 It really helped me in my reading
 it was a plesure metting mrs collier and i realy enjoyed it.it was realy fun to do and its made me read a lot more.
 thanks for doing it becuase i realy enjoyed it.
 it was different but fun
 It was fun and I want to take it again
 it was fun but the tips wernt helpfull
 IT WAS FUNNNUNUNUNUN
 it was good
 It was great
 it was great I like the part when we were playing games and bbc/video interviewing and playing football I like the
 part when we had to make our own magazines. The foul play was a good book.
 It was ok but you should do more about rugby and less on football!!!
 it was really fun
 IT WAS SOOOOOOOO FUN I WISH I COUD DO THIS AGAN
 it was verry and there was verry good books

it was very good

It's been fun doing it and it is a pleasure meeting you!!!

It's fun and wonderful.. I enjoyed working in groups and talking about interesting things.

It's good for children who want to read more.

It's good. Helped me read better

It's really made me read more. it's really fun meeting teachers at William Allitt

It's the best club I've ever been to and it's always fun to be with Mr Griffiths.

its been a fun adventure learning about football and doing quizzes

its fun and I enjoy it

its fun and interesting and it makes you feel confident and express yourself so you don't feel like you shouldn't read ever and i think you should it is the best reading group i've been in it's really good and interesting and i thank everybody

its good when we play footy

its on my year8 bucketlist

its really fun

its very fun and it gets you out of lessons

its very good to help new people

made me want to read more

Make me better reader

Overall it's really fun

playing games

PLRS was very fun. It made me want to read more. I liked watching the poem. It was funny..

Premier league reading stars has helped me to improve my reading

thank you for helping me more with enjoying reading as I now read at home on the weekends and in my spare time. thanks lots.

thank you for letting me take part of this PLRS I RATE THIS 10/10

Thank you it's been great fun

the questions

this has inspired me

Too much football

we had lots of fun playing games and we had a trip to the library.

we worked with the army readers and the trip

Well first I hated reading I didn't like reading books at all but when my class has started doing the PLRS every Wednesdays then I have got more time to actually understand my book and learn more about what's happening in the book ... but I am not that still keen to read books but I like to read some interesting books that my friends pick out for me as my friend AISHAH HANIF loves reading

well, I think plrs is okay and as I enjoy reading anyway and I still love reading.

yes it is good but there should be a better trip meeting the footballers

Yes it is very fun and I enjoyed it

you didn't help me at all the way I feel about reading is still the same. all the love

YOU MAKE ME READ MORE AND YOU ARE AN EXCELLENT TEACHER ;)

Annex 3: Pre and post children survey

1	What is your name	
2	Which Premier League club do you support?	(drop down)
3	Are you a	Boy
		Girl
4	If you don't mind, please tell us which one of these best describes you	White or White British
		Mixed
		Asian or Asian British
		Black or Black British
		Any other ethnic group: _____
5	How old are you?	numerical scale
6	What year are you in?	numerical scale
7	Do you get free school meals?	yes
		no
		don't know
		rather not say
8	Who do you look up to? (tick all that apply)	my mum or my dad or carer
		my older brother or sister
		my favourite singer or artist
		my favourite footballers
		my favourite author
		someone else: _____
9	Do you watch football? (tick all that apply)	no
		yes, the Premier League
		yes, the Football League
		yes, European football
		yes, other: _____
10	How many books have you read in the past month?	numerical scale
11	How much do you enjoy reading?	Not at all
		A bit
		Quite a lot
		Very much
12	Are you:	not at all confident about reading
		not too confident about reading
		confident about reading
		very confident about reading
13	Do you have a favourite author?	yes (who? _____)
		no
14	Do you have a favourite book (or story)?	yes (which one? _____)
		no
15	Are you a member of your local library?	yes
		no
		I don't know
16	How many times have you been to the library in the past month?	I haven't been at all
		once or twice
		three or four times
		more than four times
17	How many times have you been to the school library in the past month?	I haven't been
		once or twice
		three or four times
		more than four times
		we don't have a school library
18	Reading is more for girls than boys.	strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree
19	Reading is cool.	strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree
20	I'm proud that I'm a reader	strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree

21	I prefer reading to watching TV	strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree
22	I prefer playing video games to reading	strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree
23	It's easy to find books that are not too hard, or not too easy for me.	strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree
24	I cannot find things to read that interest me.	strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree
25	I like to encourage my friends to read	strongly agree/agree/neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree
26	What are your favourite hobbies? (tick all that apply)	video games
		music
		reading
		drawing or painting
		football
		cricket
		rugby
		other sports: _____
27	Do you think footballers read?	Other hobbies: _____
		I don't have any hobbies
		No, I'm sure they don't!
		Yes, maybe they do
		Yes, definitely!